

A. BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE TEXT

Shemot 4: 24-26 שְׁמוֹת ד: כד-כו :

- 24 At a night encampment on the way, the Lord encountered him and sought to kill him.
- 25 So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, "You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!"
- 26 And when He let him alone, she added, "A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision."

שְׁמוֹת ד: כד-כו

(כד) וַיְהִי בַדְרֹךְ בְּמִלּוֹן וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ ה' וַיִּבְקֶשׂ הַמִּיתוֹ :

(כה) וַתִּקַּח צִפּוֹרָה צֹר וַתְּכַרֵּת אֶת עֶרְלַת בְּנֵהּ וַתַּגֵּעַ לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חַתָּן דָּמִים אַתָּה לִּי :

(כו) וַיִּרְף מִמֶּנּוּ אַז אָמְרָה חַתָּן דָּמִים לְמוֹלֵת :

B. INTERPRETING THE TEXT

☒ THROUGH THE EYES OF THE ARTIST:



DAVID C. HANCOCK, GOD MEETS MOSES ON THE WAY TO EGYPT

(WITH PERMISSION OF THE ARTIST)

In the words of the artist:

The story from Exodus 4:24-26 is a classic Torah "one-liner" where something very shocking and unexpected occurs, unexplained, after which the narrative resumes its normal descriptive tone. This scene is the revelation--a surprise attack--from the sublime God. After initiating a very welcoming, encouraging relationship with Moses, God suddenly seeks to kill Moses for an oversight of which perhaps he was unaware. My rendition of the event certainly reveals God as "wholly Other" with all of the complex threatening nature of divine omnipotence in light of the responsibility of moral law.

The threatening, pointed triangle is the point of contact between the spheres of divine and human which until this point had been somewhat more fostering. Moses' wife transforms into a shrieking spirit revealing the horrific and spiritual nature of her experience in response to the conflict between God and Moses. The red spatter represents the theme of circumcision. This scene, in short, represents the fear we as humans have (and should have) of encountering the altogether-foreign divine sphere and the mystery of an all-powerful God.

[Quoted through personal communication]